

THE OHAWA PLATFORM.

Assembled upon the one hundred and sixteenth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the People's party of America, in its first national convention, invoking upon their action the blessing of Almighty God, puts forth, in the name and on behalf of the people of this country, the following preamble and declaration of principles: The conditions which surround us best justify our co-operation; we meet in the midst of a nation brought to the verge of moral, political and material ruin; corruption dominates the ballot-box, legislatures, congress, and touches even the shrine of the bench. The people are demoralized; most of the states have been compelled to isolate voters at polling places to prevent universal intimidation or bribery. Newspapers are largely subsidized or muzzled; public opinion silenced; business prostrated; our homes covered with mortgages; labor impoverished and the land concentrated in the hands of the capitalists. Urban workmen are denied the right of organization for self-protection; imported, pauperized labor beats down their wages; a hiring, standing army unrecognized by our laws is established to shoot them down, and they are rapidly degenerating into European conditions; the fruits of the toil of millions are bodily stolen to build up colossal fortunes for the few, unprecedented in the history of mankind, and the possessors of these in turn despise the republic and endanger liberty; from the same prolific womb of governmental injustice, we breed two great classes—tramps and millionaires; the national power to create money is appropriated to enrich bondholders; the vast public debt, payable in legal tender currency, has been funded into gold-bearing bonds, thereby adding millions to the burdens of the people; silver, which has been accepted as coin since the dawn of history, has been demonetized to add to the purchasing power of gold by decreasing the value of all forms of property as well as human labor, and the supply of currency is purposely abridged to fatten speculators, bankrupt enterprises and enslave industry; a vast conspiracy against mankind has been organized on the two continents and is rapidly taking possession of the world; if not met and overthrown at once it forebodes a terrible social convulsion, the destruction of civilization or the establishment of absolute despotism; we have witnessed for more than a quarter of a century the struggles of the two great political parties for power and plunder, while grievous wrongs have been inflicted upon the people; we charge that the controlling influences dominating both these parties have permitted the existing dreadful conditions to develop without serious effort to prevent or restrain them; neither do they now promise us any substantial reform; they have agreed together in the coming campaign to ignore every issue but one; they propose to drown the cries of the plundered people with the agreeable of a sham battle over tariff, so that capital, corporations, national banks, trusts, watered stocks, demonetization of silver and the oppression of usurers may be lost sight of; they propose to sacrifice our homes, lives and children on the altar of mammon; to destroy the multitude in order to secure corruption funds from millionaires. Assembled on the anniversary of the birthday of the nation, and filled with the spirit of the grand generation who established our independence, we seek to restore the government to the hands of the "plain people," with which class it originated; we assert our purposes to be identical with the purposes of the national constitution; to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for common defense, promote general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity; we declare that this government can only endure as a free government while built upon the love of the whole people for each other and for the nation; that it cannot be pinned together by a bayonet; that the civil war is over and that every passion and resentment which grew out of the war must die with it, and that we must in fact as well as in name become a united brotherhood of free men; our country finds itself confronted by conditions for which there is no precedent in the world; our annual agricultural productions amount to a billion of dollars in value, which must in a few weeks or months be exchanged for billions of dollars worth of commodities of other productions; the currency supply is wholly inadequate to make this exchange, and the results are falling of prices, the formation of combines and rings and the impoverishment of the producing class; we pledge ourselves that, if given the power, we will labor to correct these evils by wise and reasonable legislation, in accordance with the terms of our platform; we believe that the powers of government, in other words, of the people, should be expanded (as in case of the postal service) as rapidly and as far as the good sense of an intelligent people and the teachings of experience shall justify, to the end that oppression, injustice and poverty shall eventually cease in this land. While our sympathies, as the party of reform, are naturally upon the side of every proposition which will tend to make men intelligent, virtuous and temperate, we nevertheless regard these questions, important as they are, as secondary to the great issues now pressing for solution, and upon which not only our individual prosperity, but the very existence of our free institutions depend; and we ask all men to help us first determine whether we are to have the republic to administer before we differ as to the conditions upon which it is to be administered; believing that the forces of reform this day organized will never cease to move forward until every wrong is remedied and lawful rights and equal privileges securely established for all men and women in this country, we declare therefore:

First—That the union of the labor forces of the United States, this day consummated, shall be permanent and perpetual; may its spirit come into all hearts for the salvation of mankind.

Second—Wealth belongs to him who creates it, and every dollar taken from industry without equivalent is robbery. "If any will not work, neither shall he eat." The interests of rural and city laborers are the same; their enemies are identical.

Third—We believe that the time has come when railroad corporations will either own the people or the people will own the railroads, and should the government enter upon the work of owning and managing any and all railroads, we should favor an amendment to the constitution by which all persons engaged in government service should be placed under civil service regulations so as to prevent an increase of the power of the national administration by the use of such additional government employees.

Fourth—We demand a national currency, safe, sound and flexible, issued by the general government only, a legal tender for all debts, public

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and private, and that without the use of banking corporations; a just, equitable, efficient means of distribution direct to the people at a tax not to exceed 3 per cent. per annum to be provided as set forth in the sub-treasury plan of the Farmers' Alliance, or some better system also by payments in the discharge of its obligations for public improvements.

We demand the free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the legal ratio of 16 to 1.

We demand that the amount of circulating medium be speedily increased to not less than \$50 per capita.

We demand a graduated income tax.

We believe that the money of the country should be kept as much as possible in the hands of the people, and hence we demand that all state and national revenues should be limited to the necessary expenses of the government, economically and honestly administered.

We demand that postal savings banks be established by the government for the safe deposit of the earnings of the people and to facilitate exchange.

Transportation—Transportation being a method of exchange and a public necessity, the government should own and operate the railroads in the interest of the people.

The telegraph and telephone, like the post-office system, being a necessity for the transportation of news, should be owned and operated by the government in the interest of the people.

Land—Land, including all natural sources of wealth, is the heritage of the people, and should not be monopolized for speculative purposes, and the alien ownership of land should be prohibited. All land now held by railroad and other corporations in excess of their actual needs should be reclaimed by the government and held for actual settlers only.

SUPPLEMENTARY RESOLUTIONS.

Whereas, Other questions having been presented for our consideration, we hereby submit the following, not as a part of our platform, but as resolutions expressive of the sentiment of this convention:

Resolved, That we demand a free ballot and a fair count in all elections and pledge ourselves to secure it to every voter, without federal intervention, through the adoption by states of the Australian or secret ballot system.

Resolved, That the revenue received from a graduated income tax should be applied to the reduction of the burden of taxation now resting upon the domestic industries of the country.

Resolved, That we pledge our support to fair and liberal pensions to ex-Union soldiers and sailors.

Resolved, That we condemn the fallacy of protecting American labor under the present system which opens our ports to the pauper and criminal classes of the world and crowds out our own wage-earners, and we denounce the ineffective laws in regard to contract labor and demand the further restriction of undesirable immigration.

Resolved, That we cordially sympathize with the efforts of organized workmen to shorten the hours of labor, and demand a rigid enforcement of the existing eight-hour law on government work, and ask that a penalty clause be added to the said law.

Resolved, That we regard the maintenance of the large standing army of mercenaries known as the Pinkerton system, as a menace to our liberties, and we demand its abolition, and we condemn the recent invasion of the territory of Wyoming by the hired assassins of plutocracy, assisted by federal officials.

Resolved, That we commend to the favorable consideration of the people and the reform press the legislative system known as the initiative and referendum.

Resolved, That we favor a constitutional provision, limiting the tenure of office of president and vice president to one term, and providing for the election of senators of the United States by direct vote of the people.

Resolved, That we oppose any subsidy or national aid to any private corporation for any purpose.

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